

March 6, 2017

Dear Co-Chair Kennedy, Co-Chair Miner, Co-Chair Demicco, Vice Chair Flexer, Vice Chair Gresko, Vice Chair Somers, Ranking Member Harding, and Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

Please accept this public hearing testimony for the following 5 bills. I also request you bring up HB 5615 (allowing towns to ban trapping).

I care about animals, including wildlife, and I vote.

1) I STRONGLY OPPOSE SB 522 which would allow bear hunting. There is no need to allow bear hunting in Connecticut since the population of 700 bears is not out of control. Bears are slow to reproduce and a likely hunting frenzy could easily decimate this population. A better, more humane way is to remove the things that attract them and learn to haze them. The majority of CT residents like bears and would likely welcome education on how to best co-exist with them rather than see them needlessly killed.

2) I STRONGLY OPPOSE HB 5499 which would expand Sunday hunting. I want a day to enjoy the woods in peace for myself and my companion animals, and not worry about knowing that animals are suffering, or coming across a suffering animal. Hunters have many days to hunt while most people only have the weekends to enjoy the CT outdoors and the outdoors belongs to both groups. Comparatively, hunters make up a smaller population of residents and their desires should not supersede non-hunters. This bill does nothing to reduce the incidence of Lyme disease, and will not reduce the deer population in any sustainable way. Bow hunting on Sundays is an outrageous expansion that is not fair to the overwhelming majority of non-hunters (e.g., hikers, birders, mountain bikers).

3) I SUPPORT HB 6335 which would ban ivory sales. The illegal trade is horrifically cruel, will likely lead to extinction, is a known funding source for

major terrorist organizations, and over a thousand park rangers have been killed by poachers. CT needs to join NY and NJ, else we will become a haven for illicit ivory.

4) I SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS, SB 942 -- Cecil's law, anti-trophy hunting.

Amendment recommendations: please see testimony submitted by The HSUS, which include details on making sure that federal law does not pre-empt our efforts, and making sure that this bill does not weaken existing CT law. Another recommendation includes defining "Africa Big Five" as its traditionally defined (which includes African buffalo and puts white and black rhinos into one category, not two).

I support anti-trophy hunting measures. Hunters prefer to kill the largest and the strongest animals, whose strong genes are lost to future generations. Further, when a dominant African lion is killed, he leaves females and cubs vulnerable to a hostile pride takeover from another male, in which case the new male will kill the cubs of the previous lion. Trophy hunting is not conservation. Widespread corruption also often accompanies trophy hunting.

5) I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB 6334 which would require registration for all brick-and-mortar animal shelters and allow for inspections and creation of regulations that define standards of care. This could allow for early intervention to remedy problems before they escalate into conditions that would warrant prosecution under animal cruelty statutes (CGS 53-247), both preventing animal suffering and saving taxpayer dollars associated with prosecution of cruelty cases.

6) Finally, in these last days of public hearings, I ask that you consider bringing up HB 5615 for a public hearing. HB 5615 would give local control to allow municipalities to determine whether or not they want to ban trapping. Trapping is cruel and indiscriminate (dogs, cats, and birds are often caught in these traps). Further, trapping does not control population size. Learning how to remove attractants, exclusion strategies and how to haze, are the humane, simple, and effective solutions that I support, and I want my town to be able to take a stand against trapping. Our neighbors in Massachusetts,

Rhode Island, and New Jersey have banned or severely restricted use of
leghold and body-crushing traps.

Again, to remind you...I deeply care about animals and I vote!

Yours truly,
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